enacted by 8 States/Union Territories *viz.* Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry.

(b) There is no such proposal in the Ministry.

Agreements with Libya in petroleum sector

*214. MS. MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the outcome of his recent visit to Libya;

(b) whether an Indian oil company has been permitted to widen its exploration operation in Libya;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the terms of such agreement;

(d) whether an Indian PSE has been given a contract to modernize the oil refineries in that country;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether Government made an assessment of commercial benefits to the country with such an agreement; and

(g) whether such an agreement enhances energy security of the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (f) Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas visited Libya recently, alongwith a delegation comprising Chairmen/Managing Directors of oil public sector units (PSUs) and other officials. During the aforesaid

visit, issues relating to award of a few discovered blocks to Indian oil companies in joint venture with National Oil Corporation (NOC), Libya, upgradation of NOC's refineries by Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) in a joint venture with NOC, providing city gas distribution services in Libya by various Indian companies, training of NOC's personnel in hydrocarbon sector by various Indian Oil Companies etc. were discussed. IOCL has shown interest for modernization and upgradation of Ras Lanuf refinery by a Joint Venture Company to be co-promoted by National Oil Corporation (NOC), Libya and IOCL.

(g) No agreement has been signed with Libya in this regard.

Opening of banks in Uttar Pradesh

†*215. SHRI BANWARI LAL KANCHHAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether proposals for opening more branches of Nationalised and Co-operative banks in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh are pending with the Central Government; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Proposals for opening branches of nationalized and cooperative banks are submitted to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and not to the Government of India. Under the present Branch Authorization Policy of the RBI relating to Scheduled Commercial Banks, the banks are free to submit their Annual Branch Expansion Plans any time during the year. The RBI, however, grants aggregated approvals on an annual basis. As on date, the annual branch expansion plan of Syndicate Bank (a nationalized bank) is under consideration of the RBI. The proposal includes opening of 8 branches in urban/semi-urban centres in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

RBI has reported that no proposal for opening of any branch in the State

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.